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OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS
WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
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GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the Society for International Federation of Business and Professional Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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The International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW) was organized in 1930 to bring together business and professional women in all parts of the world regardless of race, nationality or religion. Its purpose is to work for equal opportunities for all women in the economic, civil and political life of the societies in which they live. It now has affiliates in 107 countries, many in the developing world and Eastern Europe. It was among the first to achieve consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, in 1947, and to be granted category I classification, in 1978. It also has consultative status with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and works closely with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). IFBPW maintains permanent representatives to the Economic and Social Council and the Commission

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on Human Rights, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission for Social Development, the Population Commission, the Committee on Natural Resources, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and IFBPW also has representatives to the five regional commissions who attend related meetings and have found the opportunity to work with members of the secretariats in each location to be helpful. We believe that the information and experience we have to offer is of value to the related bodies of the United Nations; especially as they deal with economic issues, employment opportunities and the status of women.

Experience gained in exercising its consultative status has led IFBPW to the belief that the arrangements as set forth in paragraph 14 of resolution 1296 (XLIV), adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 23 May 1968, have proved to be productive as well as innovative. They have furthered the work of IFBPW and the United Nations to improve the position of women as they seek economic independence for all women. They have provided the channel through which the opinions and concerns of persons living on the local level around the world could be expressed, through IFBPW, directly to the United Nations and its related bodies and agencies. They have made possible cooperative action in dealing with common problems and the enlisting of the initiative and resources of persons, coming from where they live, to further the goals set by the United Nations.

IFBPW has used the channel provided through paragraph 14 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) extensively through interventions and written statements to the Economic and Social Council, its commissions and related bodies. Presentations have been based on answers received to questionnaires which were distributed to affiliates on specific issues, and to resolutions adopted at international and regional meetings to further agreed-upon objective of IFBPW. Some have presented new ideas, as set forth, for example, in document E/CN.6/1972/NGO/244, presented to the Commission on the Status of Women, and signed by eight organizations in consultative status, asking for one year in which to consider issues of concern to women, an item not in the agenda. The suggestion was picked up by delegates proposing the first International Women's Year (1975), which was followed by many programmes and conferences, to culminate with the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing, China, in 1995. Other statements have offered support for measures already adopted, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, for whose provisions IFBPW worked to secure ratification and implementation by all countries.

Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 and especially its paragraph 14 should continue as stated to be a cornerstone in government-non-governmental organization cooperation. Review of, and efforts to strengthen, its provisions so as to take into account developments and new needs, are essential but the value of the present arrangements must not be lost. Efforts to establish new partnerships are important so that the United Nations and non-governmental organizations in all parts of the world can work together to help meet the tremendous needs for new initiatives to assist in building expanding economies in a more just and peaceful world.

Suggestions include: (a) placing the non-governmental organization units of the secretariats in a more central position within the United Nations framework with additional staff to deal with all relationships between non-governmental organizations and United Nations bodies; (b) establishing focal points in each region with personnel to work with non-governmental organization regional and national representatives of all countries of the region on a wide range of activities, possibly using the headquarters of the regional commissions; (c) in reviewing relationships, finding different symbols to avoid confusions now existing between organizations in consultative status and organizations and groups that are not in consultative status or are working in one specific area related to the United Nations. Each is important but each has different interests and responsibilities, expertise and capabilities, with respect to furthering United Nations programmes and objectives.